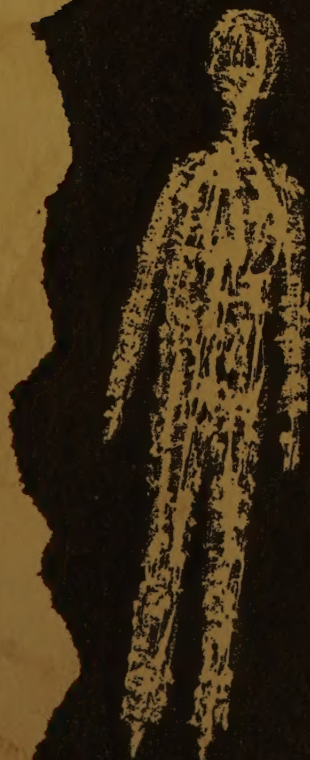


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# Integrity

divorce



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**editorial**

Here is how this issue on Divorce came into being. Last September we had an issue on Single Women; quite to our surprise, in response to it we received letters from a number of Catholic divorcées pointing out that no one had looked into their situation nor helped them to make constructive use of their state. These letters recalled to us another letter we had received some months previously from a Catholic divorced man, a young man who saw himself enmeshed in an irremediable predicament. He was sincere in not wanting to re-marry, but how, he wondered, was he going to stand the intolerable years ahead.

**divorce: a contemporary problem**

Divorce is a social problem that looms large on the American scene, so large indeed that the facts of divorce no longer shock us. Even the statistics showing that approximately one out of every three marriages of the past decade is ending in divorce and that the number of divorces in the United States currently hit 400,000 a year (in other words, annually, 800,000 adults are involved in divorces, not to mention the number of children) are rather taken for granted. For the Catholic, this numbing of the collective conscience has inevitable results. The sacrament of matrimony does not change, neither does the lifetime duration of the marriage alter. Yet, the modern Christian marriage is lived out in a culture where divorce is acceptable, and where the social pressure, which in former ages bolstered the permanency of an otherwise shaky marriage, has completely collapsed.

All this is almost too obvious to mention. Yet the sob stories in favor of divorce, which to the Catholic should be so much alien corn, nevertheless have sub-conscious effects. Suddenly, it seems, the split mentality is there. "Of course, *we'd* never consider getting a divorce," but the devout Catholic who says this finds himself encouragingly condoning his divorced sister in marrying again. "She's lonely and anyway who's going to support her?" A hard, factual, down-to-earth question. To be answered easily by a nice spiritual up-in-the air answer? No, let us admit that it isn't easy to pit faith against the facts of life in the modern world. The Catholic view of marriage is entirely divergent from the secular. And, while the natural, sociological reasons against divorce and re-marriage are manifold, still the Catholic loses ground if



✓ he tries to prove that *every* re-marriage is miserable, or that *all* children of divorces end up mentally disturbed or delinquent. The effects of immorality aren't that simple. The Catholic opposition to divorce is rooted not in shifting pragmatic sands, but on the firm ground of faith. The Christian dispensation involves a whole change of life; Moses allowed divorce to the Jews (on account of hardness of heart) but Christ comes not merely to soften hearts but to redeem them and to make human love participate in His own love. Divorce is no longer something to be argued about merely on the natural level, for married love has been transformed and marriage itself exalted.

But, how to make all this understandable to our contemporaries? And how to show disapproval of divorce yet understanding and charity toward those attempting re-marriage after divorce? The social ostracism by the faithful which in ages of faith and in a Catholic country had salutary effects on the wayward member of the Church seems in our era to have little effect. For even if his few Catholic friends won't recognize his marriage, society will. Yet how can the faithful Catholic continue social contact without seeming to manifest approval? This question, of course, is only a facet of the whole issue of Catholic behavior in a secular age. Faith and principle never change; applications do; customs (such as social ostracism) can become anachronistic and they need re-examination in every era.

### the pat solution

When the article *An Alcoholic Husband* came into the office, someone on the staff ventured the criticism that it didn't have a solution. We started thinking about that and here is what we concluded: it is almost an impossibility for human beings to learn and then fully to accept the fact that there are some life situations which *don't* have a solution; in which one must simply blunder through and depend on grace as did the writer of the article. Even we Catholics are so trained in the *Reader's Digest* school of optimism and the Peale Positive Thinking (which we see is coming in for some belated criticism) that we expect every question to have an answer, every problem to have a solution. We peer over one another's shoulders to look at the answer they've found and then we pattern our lives accordingly.

The article on the alcoholic husband doesn't give a pattern. For one thing, alcoholism is not only one of the most difficult problems in a marriage with which to cope, but it is a situation for which marriage

experts agree that there isn't any one definitely recommended course of action. The non-drinking party in the marriage is under a terrific strain for even if she (or he) faithfully attempts to follow the counsels (often conflicting) given by experts, she still has her own reactions and emotions. She cannot observe her partner with the expert's clinical detachment nor can she have the objectivity of the therapist—she herself is too intimately involved. She cannot give herself completely to the needs of her husband, she has to consider the children and the good of the whole family. What can she do then, except to try her best, in simplicity and love, and "to blunder through and depend on grace."

### **broken homes and unhappy marriages**

The effect of divorce on children is serious, so serious indeed that many Catholic apologists have urged that the worst sort of a home is better for children than the home broken by divorce. It may be countered, however, that the Church in allowing couples to separate (and even to get a legal divorce to protect their civil rights; not, needless to say, that such a divorce breaks the marriage bond or leaves the couple free to marry again) recognizes that there are some conditions which are so intolerable that they rule out continued living together. The Church does not insist that the child be kept in a home where he is constantly exposed to obscenities, or where the couple expose before him their mutual infidelities. In such a case living with one parent in comparative peace may be better than living with both in a nightmare of horror.

But this is a matter in which one must not be too categorical. We can recognize the prudence of the Church and wish that as individuals we had more of a share in it. But, in passing, we can note that while we Catholics are laudably concerned about the children of divorce, we should also be concerned about the number of Catholic young people and adolescents who are disturbed and unhappy, the products of loveless marriages, of tense family life, where parents "stuck together" but deprived their children of love and normality. To prevent such disasters, we can hope that there will be increasing importance given to preparing young people for marriage, more effective marriage counselling, wider use of Cana and pre-Cana Conferences. The promotion of the full Christian life is our best answer not only to divorce but to unhappy marriages.

from our readers

**"lay people growing up"**

To the Editor:

Thanks for the fine article on *Why Don't Lay People Grow Up?* and shame on Carol Jackson for her too flippant review of *Introduction to Theology*. . . . The six volumes of this new theology library are more than a "neat trick" and there can be no question of whether or not "they can do it." They've done it (I read the work in French) and it is one of the best efforts to re-think our faith yet published. . . .

To get back to the *Lay People*—Father Pastor drops some wise remarks. It is a subject that should be kicked around more (suggestion: special number of *Integrity*). However, I don't think it's true that the "absolute monarch" type is as dead as all that. Do you? Above all, the "practical man" hasn't died out. The Church is still growing (and fast) and organization and expansion problems are more numerous than ever. There is no doubt that a practical priest can be apostolic too. But let's not kid ourselves. Above all, let us never take a pastor's success as an administrator as "a measure of his priestly success in general." That's bowing low before Mammon. We can't excuse priests too much because there was "a practical job to be done in a hurry." The apostolic and early patristic ages involved a good deal of building and organizing and generally practical work. But it wasn't the measure of the spiritual success of that age. Witness the deep theological thought (the Sunday sermons of the time, for example) and concern for the liturgy. It was a time, if we may use a gross illustration, when pastors would settle down to reading and preaching something like the *Introduction to Theology*. The fire of the Holy Spirit is unmistakable.

Another thing I violently (that is perhaps the wrong word) disagree with is the defeatist suggestion of not treating Catholics as grown-ups until they grow up. Talk about vicious circles! It might not be too bold to advance the opinion that priests are not grown up. By that I mean their frequent attitude (which amounts to a foregone conclusion) that the laity don't want to grow up. I personally find a kind of spiritual inquietude on their part. The various family movements are an instance in point. Here in Montreal (to cite a case history as does Father Pastor, and by the way, his doesn't ring true



somehow) the Christian Family Movement has really taken with young married couples—three-quarters of them college graduates. They sincerely wish to cash in on all the graces of their sacrament and make their families *Holy Families*. The only real obstacle to their progress is lack of chaplains. Pastors of course can't be approached on the question, but even curates shy away. Why? Because they don't feel up to talking about conjugal spirituality, about the sanctification of the body, about the love of a man for a woman. In this case it goes back to what Father Lord used to say about youth: they love it! (*It* being things spiritual.) There are two sides to every question. I've jotted down a few ideas haphazardly as they came to me. I do think though that it is a subject that should be shaken up some more.

FATHER BERNARD MURCHLAND, C.S.C.  
Montreal, Canada

To the Editor:

After reading this calm appraisal of our situation vis-a-vis the clergy, my general impression is one of sympathetic agreement. When we look at similar relationships in European nations, we must admit that we are most fortunate in this country to have such understanding between clergy and laity. Father Pastor is atypical in that he recognizes the danger imminent in our refusal to embrace Catholic Action on a general basis. He would agree with me, I am sure, in saying that our answer to the clarion call of Pius XI has been a muted whisper.

Father Pastor intimates that the laity are not grown up and want to stay that way. I would agree, but I would ask, "How about the clergy?" Do they understand the problems of young people and those with children? Why are the clergy satisfied with passive Catholicism if accompanied by a full collection plate?

If we both agree on the need for Catholic Action, I should think that the clergy would seek out likely prospects for Catholic Action in the confessional, the natural habitat of those trying to do more to restore Christ to society.

Too often the spark of Catholic Action is gotten outside the parish and then is smothered by parish inactivity. Leaving aside the question whether or not our Catholic colleges perform their duty with respect to Catholic Action, I think that the average parish is sadly delinquent in this respect. Interested laity have been emphatically rebuked and told to mind their own business. In many cases when one seeks approval for such a program as the Christian Family Movement, one is

told to retreat to the Rosary and the Holy Name Societies.

In conclusion, I think that if the clergy believe they have found us wanting, let them try us again since we both realize the need for a broad program of Catholic Action in this country. Let us hope it is only a question of time before we agree on a solution of this dilemma. Perhaps it will not be too long before we have an American version of "Revolution in a City Parish."

JOHN W. NEVIN  
Flushing, N. Y.

To the Editor:

In the March *Integrity* I read about the parallel process of growing up and undertaking apostolic action. I assume that those who are not grown-up apostles are either stunted or senile, and the blame for both conditions is with clergy and educators.

I do believe some of us are stunted and senile, not just because of the teaching authorities, but because we haven't launched out into the areas of life which reward us with maturity and wisdom. And we haven't launched out into these areas of life, for something of the same reason that young men don't go to sea any more, to be tested and tried, and to earn their manhood.

Something in the way the Joneses are living these days, stifles the challenges that make for experience, judgment, and growth. And Catholics are living quite like the Joneses.

Catholic life is something other than the limited activity which Jones calls life. If we live as the Benedicts and the Thomases, the Augustines and the Francises, our scope is something broader than all the generations and branches put together of Jones, Jones and Jones.

A Catholic who sees automation in terms of Benedict's philosophy of work, *as well as* the next-door neighbor's joblessness in the height of industrial output, *and* the leisure-class American, *and* the toiling peasantry of the rest of the world—*he* is the one who is beginning to grow up, whether he is priest or layman, patriarchal or practical.

"Action" which comes from this type of thinking about our life and times should concern the person's life, his environment, his people. It is by directly and intimately assuming the nearest problem at hand that one is thrown into the tempest. And again, only by pitching into the problem does any kind of advancement or growth come. . . .

BRIGID O'HARA  
New York City



Father Peter Canon

## can a catholic get a divorce?

*A priest who has graduate degrees in theology  
and law, and who is an assistant in a large  
city parish, gives an answer.*

"Father, my husband wants a divorce. But I am a Catholic and I won't give it to him. I could not as a Catholic. Am I right, Father?"

I have to think back: several other families I know.

Take Jane. She was thirteen at the time. She had been away from home for about a week. The police had found her camping on a roof. She looked green and terribly unkempt. When the policeman had left her alone with me, she was as silent as in his presence. All I could get out of her, after a while, was: "I hate him. I am so sorry for her." I knew her father. He was a periodic jailbird and a heavy drinker. He abused the children and brought no money home. Her mother had been to court several times—after every nasty beating her husband gave her—and once had obtained a legal separation. And every time, after a few weeks, her husband was back with her in the apartment, at least for a few nights. When she wanted to get rid of him again, no judge would listen to her plea and enforce the separation after so many reconciliations. Wasn't it her fault that he was allowed to come back again and again? She would have to make up her mind once and for all that she didn't want him around.

"I am so sorry for her," Jane repeated.

"Why? It's your mother who allows your father to come back."

And thirteen-year-old Jane replied, "Oh Father, that's just sex."

Later on, Jane, after she had become delinquent again and again, was given a last chance by the judge at the home term court to go back home on probation rather than to go to a reformatory. She knew well what the reformatory was; she had a friend who had been there. And

she asked the judge to let her go there rather than home. "It can't be worse, so it must be better."

This was a case where the woman was guilty for not making some kind of provision for a permanent separation or even a divorce.

And here in front of me sits a woman who says that a Catholic can under no circumstances conceive of getting a divorce.

### **The Church and divorce**

Of course, in the "perfect society" that is true. It is likewise true that the Church always has approved of the enforced separation of husband and wife in extreme cases. The Church always has taught that in marriage the spouses give to each other an exclusive right to their bodies and to community of life, but that there are circumstances under which this right cannot be urged. The common good can require the absence of the man on military service or in jail or in the hospital. The individual good of the spouses can require abstention from common life or married intimacy for reasons such as grave sickness—especially when contagious, drunkenness, or the attempt of one partner to induce the other to commit a mortal sin. The Church always has taught that a man loses the exercise of his right by infidelity, until his wife has forgiven him (and this, of course, is true as well when the woman is the offender). But not only the common good, or the good of the individual, but also the good of the children, can in extreme cases require or make permissible a separation from bed and board.

Such separation in no way touches the marriage vow. In no way does it revoke the total gift man and woman have made to each other. In no way does it change the fact that husband and wife are for each other the source of the graces of the sacrament, for better or for worse. It only suspends the exercise of some external rights—like the suspension of the right to free movement in society of a man infected with a contagious disease, like the suspension of the right to sign a check of a man who commits himself to a mental institution.

The Church in her all-encompassing canon law, grown out of the experience of centuries and different cultures and societies, reserves for herself the judgment on the right of the spouses to arrive at external separation. (The suspension of the right to married intimacy has to be judged by the spouses themselves.) In her universal law she gives the bishops discretionary powers to judge and she asks the bishops to consider varying cultures, countries and civil laws, and according to

them judge the evils which will permit a separation, and the external juridical form by which such a separation will have to be protected.

In a society in which civil law is made in accordance with canon law (that is, in harmony with it, taking the Christian concept of the nature of marriage as the pattern for civil marriage legislation) there will generally be room for a civil separation which helps to achieve all the purposes for which the Church would permit separation.

In such a society or culture—this I grant the woman who speaks to me in the parlor—a Catholic would not be permitted to accede to her partner's request for a divorce. For, what would such a divorce mean except permission for the partner to legalize another union; that is, to gain social respectability for a concubinage? "I am a Catholic; I can't give him a divorce," would be the only right answer in such a case. For a Catholic to allow her partner to divorce her would mean to help break down respect for marriage.

### **Divorce in our culture**

But I am sitting in a parlor in New York State. The woman who speaks to me tells me that her husband has a job in Florida, where he is living with another woman. For two years, ever since he left her, she has had to work hard and has hardly been able to feed her children. Her husband seems to have a good job. He must; otherwise he couldn't even think of asking her for a divorce.

She is faced with the problem of getting support and maintenance for herself and the children. There are two legal remedies: she can consent to the husband's petition for a Florida divorce which he has made on the grounds of cruelty; or she can procure a support order from a New York court. However, the practical problem is getting the husband to pay up. To sue him in the New York court would take time, money and much trouble. Her lawyer suggests that her husband will more readily obey the provisions of the Florida divorce decree, giving her alimony and maintenance for the children. Further, the lawyer insists, unless she puts in an appearance or signs the papers instead, her husband could get a decree of divorce in her absence on some defamatory ground without any provision for her support. Therefore, he strongly advises her to sign the papers she holds in her hand, and thus to protect her children.

I try to make her see that, in the United States of 1955, there might be instances in which a Catholic can in good conscience grant



a divorce to her spouse, after consulting the proper Church authority. And if one partner is set on getting a divorce the other spouse might be bound in conscience, in order to avoid scandal, to choose the least ugly procedure.

By now she has come around to understand that it is not necessarily a sin to be the partner of a divorce. Divorce is always caused by a sin—its possibility is a consequence of original sin and its actuality a consequence of the personal sin of one or both of the spouses. Legal divorce, which gives a validly married man the civil right to get married again, (to "legalize" a sin!) is a fact in our society, and within reach of every Catholic who wants to sin. And as little as this woman is allowed to help her husband to commit a sin, as little can she help suffering from her husband's sin. She is not obliged to expose herself or her children to serious spiritual or material damage just in order to make it more difficult for her husband to hide his sin of adultery with a sin of hypocrisy—as long as there is no danger of her suffering being taken for complacency or of giving rise to scandal.

The woman who came to see me in the rectory has come around to understanding that the divorce will in no way touch her vow. She has come around to seeing that often Catholics are afraid even to say the word "divorce," not because they are such good Catholics, but because they have been infected themselves by the un-Christian atmosphere in which they live; they have started *without noticing it* to think of real divorce as something possible. But for a Christian "divorce" in the sense of American law is an impossibility; it does not exist.

This woman, losing her fear of the word "divorce," will again be able to pray with a clear head, even though with a sorrowful heart. She now knows that after her husband's adultery she has a right to refuse common life with him. More than that, she has the right to ask the Church for a permanent separation. She cannot give a father to these children, or rather, she cannot give *their* father to the children. But she can preserve his memory for them. She knows that the grave responsibility rests on her to educate the children to love their father, to honor him, to look up to him and forgive his sin, which hurts them even more than it does her. She can see to it that the children be hurt as little as possible.

And after consulting with the proper authority, she will carry the consequences of her husband's sin as her cross, through which he, God willing, may be saved.



two views

## spirituality for the divorced

*Everyone, at some time or other, has to come to a point of decision between subjection to or rejection of the will of God. The divorced Catholic, in a rather unique way, is forced into the decision of accepting all of Christ's teachings or turning from them completely. This fact is discussed from two viewpoints—  
a priest's and a divorcée's.*

### A DIVORCÉE'S VIEW:

Divorced Catholics cannot wait for someone else to find their niche in the Church, to tell them how they can become a vital part of the Mystical Body. They have to do their own searching.

In seeking the needed spiritual outlook is there any reason why a Catholic divorcée cannot dedicate herself to being a Catholic divorcée? (I use divorcée in the feminine sense, not because I'm excluding the masculine divorced Catholic, but merely because I myself am a woman.) It is true that the state is not of her choosing. Nobody is going to say it is a very fine state, like the religious life or matrimony. Nevertheless, if God gave her the role of being a divorcée, certainly He sees some good in it, some great potential.

The need for spirituality is continually being impressed on the divorced Catholic by the fact that her temptations are too great to be fought in a negative manner. Self-pity is one violent devil. Impurity

is another. Hate looms up. The divorcée has either been wronged by her spouse, brought to her suffering by her own willfulness, or perhaps merely by unforeseen circumstances, or a combination of all three. In any case whether the hate is of self, of the former mate, or of the world in general, it has to be faced and must be conquered with love.

But in some cases she is not being falsely self-righteous in feeling that her husband treated her unjustly. Here the teachings of Christ are hard but clear. Here is a real test of Christianity—of loving someone who reviles you—that can only be handled by prayer. The divorced woman must pray for herself that she be given the ability to forgive, she must pray for the person whom she must forgive.

### Sexual temptations

Less specific feelings of hate, such as hate of the world in general must be overcome. While the world points at the divorcée with certain scorn, it also beckons enticingly. The sexual temptations of the single girl have been treated in *Integrity*, but such temptations are far greater for the divorcée. Not only is she considered fairer game than her single sister, but she is easier game in that she finds it hard to control impulses and passions that once had a natural outlet in marriage. Besides she is blinded by her craving for affection. No longer can she hide behind a wide-eyed look of real or pretended innocence.

Though not a virgin, she must live as one. Her marriage vow adds adultery to unchastity. She cannot even dream of a future marriage without wishing her husband dead. If her husband has disappeared or re-married, she cannot even hope for a reconciliation. There is no way but the lonely one. Without God the path is indeed unbearable.

The temptations to seek material things may be very great for the married woman. How much greater are they for the divorced woman with children! Her children are denied the elements of a happy home life and must bear a certain stigma. It can easily become her passion to want *at least* to give her children financial security. The impossibility of being both a good mother and a good father is a frustrating reality.

The divorced Catholic has plenty of good self-pity material. Yet, in her very temptations and frustrations, might lie her salvation and her strength. The minute she seeks not to be understood but to understand, she can become a uniquely valuable asset to Christianity.



She is forced to come face to face with herself. If she learns to look herself straight in the eye, she will be able to be understanding of others. For, in studying her own temptations and weaknesses in cold light, she will learn to understand the weaknesses of others.

### **A strange apostolate**

Once the divorcée opens her heart, sees what is there and then opens the door to her home, she can expect a steady stream of people who could use her understanding. To her will come the woman having marital troubles who will not pour them out so readily to the happily married woman. She will come to the divorcée perhaps secretly hoping that she will be told to get a divorce and how to go about getting it. Knowing what this state means the divorced Catholic can paint a very unrosy picture. Without refusing sympathy she can still point out that divorce has its own grave problems.

The lonely single woman will seek out the divorced woman. She is working during the day and so cannot call on the married woman. In the evenings she is afraid to intrude on the privacy of the married couple. But she will come to the divorced woman knowing that she understands her loneliness. With her, perhaps, she will feel free to discuss the marriage prospect she is doubtful about.

Even teen-agers will come to the divorced woman, seeing in her someone more worldly wise than their own mothers. And, knowing the results of a too hasty marriage, the Catholic divorcée can give teen-agers some subtle steering.

Yes, once she opens the door she will find herself too busy. There are times when she will wish she were a misanthrope. She will get discouraged because people don't really want advice. But she knows that she has to keep on being the *bad* example that is a good example—a good example of how marriage mistakes are costly. Admittedly this is a strange apostolate. But who is to say it is without merit?

There are, no doubt, many priests who would like to find a divorced Catholic to whom they could refer those contemplating divorce or an unwise marriage. People are inclined to say about the priest "What does he know about it?" A Catholic divorcée might know nothing about theology but she can be the illustration, the exhibit number one, of the consequences of the contemplated act. It isn't fun to be an exhibit of stupidity. But like the gift of the Jongleur de Notre Dame, it can be pleasing to God and His Mother.

## Divorcées Anonymous

Divorcées need help if they are going to live a full Christian life, but I can't quite decide whether there should be an organization. I've often wondered about a Catholic Divorcées Anonymous. I once approached a priest with the idea—a priest active in helping such wonderful group therapy organizations as Alcoholics Anonymous and Discovery, Inc. He felt that perhaps divorced Catholics could join or start their own branch of the existing Divorcées Anonymous.

I'm inclined to feel that, because of the impossibility for Catholics of re-marriage, divorced Catholics have not enough in common with other divorced persons and too much in common with each other—in other words that for Catholics any such organization should be exclusively Catholic divorcées (female) or exclusively Catholic divorcés (male). I think the Catholic divorced woman would be testing her strength too far by joining a group of non-Catholic divorced women, where there would be too big a dose of re-marriage talk to take all at once. In the same vein, there is considerable doubt that divorced Catholics, male and female, are saintly enough to be thrown together. Even though platonic or common-higher-goal friendships are possible, there is, also, always the possibility of causing scandal.

Two distinct groups of divorced Catholics seem to be the most feasible possibility. Certainly important work could be done by divorced Catholics both in trying to save wobbly marriages and in helping young people to make stable, sturdy marriages.

Meantime here are some suggestions for the divorced that might be of help: Stop feeling sorry for yourself. Stop blaming the Church and other Catholics for making life hard for you. Don't stay in the shadows as if you didn't have any place in the Church. Participate willingly in parish activities.

Never despair of God's grace. Remember that no matter how insurmountable the temptations seem, no matter how many times you temporarily give up fighting them, that God understands that you need special graces.

Find a priest who is willing to try to help you. Admittedly this is not easy to do. However, if you don't want to bother a priest about being your spiritual director, at least seek a regular confessor. Your problems of conscience can be better handled by a regular confessor who knows something of your case, and saves you the continual explanation of the fact that you are divorced.

Don't evade questions such as "How can you be a Catholic and divorced?" and "Why don't you marry again?". Don't ignore these many opportunities you are given to bear witness to your Catholicism. Arm yourself with a knowledge of the Church's teachings on marriage and defend them. You might actually learn to love them and the incongruity of arguments for the indissolubility of marriage coming from you might find more than deaf ears. Don't be afraid to point out to your happily married friends who urge your re-marriage that you, by not getting married again, are helping them; you are trying to do your share to uphold the whole marriage structure of which they are a part.

### Happiness here

Whether the Catholic divorcée tries to be a saint or not, there is the practical consideration that in striving for sanctity she is also seeking sanity. This is part of the seeming incongruity of Catholicism. It demands she take the hard way which often turns out to be the easy way.

The divorced Catholic who rejects her religion often succeeds only in making a worse mess of her life. Whereas the Catholic divorcée who accepts the "wisdom of Mother Church" often sees that wisdom quite concretely.

For instance, there is the Catholic divorcée whose husband, after many years and another marriage and another divorce, came back to her. And she had the added joy of seeing her oldest child enter the priesthood. Then there's the divorcée who is now the much-loved and much-wanted *only* grandparent of a number of children. Her daughter, whom the divorcée brought up single-handed, married a fine man—an orphan—who welcomed her into their home.

And there's the great-grandmother, whose husband left her taking her money—way back when divorce was never mentioned. The story goes that because of her great beauty and vitality she had many a suitor who wanted to rescue her, all of whom she quickly but graciously declined. Yet she never seemed to lose the love of her religion and still today her warmth, her womanliness and great hospitality are admired by all.

There is the case of the divorcée without children who for several years contemplated a second marriage. She turned down the temptation and later the man she might have married was put into an institution as hopelessly insane. Certainly not because of her rejection! Since



then she has found a rewarding career. Many divorcées without children have found in careers of service satisfaction that they never thought possible.

The world seems to offer only one way for the divorcée to prove herself—re-marriage. Christ proffers THE WAY, which offers too much for both the here and hereafter to even consider turning down. However, self-pity can be as dark glasses that hide appealing possible explorations and take all the brightness out of the scenic beauties along the road that is THE WAY to Heaven.

### A PRIEST'S VIEW:

As men and women who have accepted the good news brought by Christ our God, we must constantly work at reversing what is worldly in our outlook. If we think that happiness is a matter of achieving business success or a beautiful home or the satisfaction of one's instincts or the perfection even of the deepest and noblest human intimacies on earth, then we are not Christian: what is more, we will never in fact find lasting happiness in any such goal *in itself*, because our true happiness even in this life consists in knowing and loving God and being one with Him. Since nothing less will fill the human heart, without God we are bound to be frustrated. Attuned to the one Being and to the one End for which I am in existence at all, I shall find everyone and everything immeasurably enriched, and enriching me—the deprivations and the sorrows as well as the satisfactions. Separated from the Source which gives to me, and to all that is, its reality and meaning, I am emptied and clutching at emptiness.

Our Lord, Who "knew what was in man," fully comprehending how easily we become slaves to earthly idols, drew startling conclusions. "Woe upon you who are rich, who are filled full; woe upon you who laugh now; woe upon you, when all men speak well of you . . ." The fortunate, the blessed are those whom the world we live in counts unlucky and miserable and lacking in drive: the detached, the "poor in spirit"; the meek and gentle and unaggressive; the reviled and calumniated and persecuted. This is the plain preaching of Wisdom Incarnate; and the pattern of His practice from the cattle-trough to the cross. It applies to the whole of human life: equally, as a principle, to those who are "rich" in friendships and human intimacies. "A rich man will not easily enter God's kingdom."

## Vocation to solitude

Solitude and aloneness is the essential condition of every human being as such, whether he or she be married, unmarried, deserted, divorced, celibate by choice or by circumstance. Religious adolescence begins with realization of the void in me that only One can round out. All that heart or mind or senses go out to in this world is loved or desired or found pleasing just in so far as there is some reflection of Infinite Beauty and Lovableness in it. "God alone is infinitely worth loving."

Conjugal and maternal love are holy—that is, satisfying to the human spirit—only when in harmony with the love of God. Because of the intensity and exclusiveness of sexual love, much prayer, much sacrifice, much grace will be needed before a perfect harmony is realized. How many spouses in love are even aware of their dilemma? A happily married wife can sometimes awake quite late to the truth that neither husband nor children are strictly adorable, and be almost unnerved by the awareness that she is not and can never be wholly satisfied in all this fullness of reciprocal human love. Where there is no knowledge, to quiet her consternation, that God is her final end, such secret loneliness-in-intimacy can be harder to endure than the loneliness of the unmarried. No loneliness can be more bitter than the shared and open loneliness of the many who are unhappily married. At its best, marriage may cloak human isolation: it cannot cure it.

## Self-giving

But what about the woman divorced and alone?

If it be true that woman is more capable of self-giving than man, more simple, less devoted to things and more to persons, then it follows—and to her glory—that in the achieving of her main purpose the woman alone will be freer, but will also face a greater challenge, than the man. Less easily than he can she idolatrously lose herself in the vanities of a career or a profession. The mystery of her nature is underlined by St. Paul: "Woman was created for man, and man for God." She serves God in persons, whether by "waiting on many needs" or by listening at their feet. The obvious—and statistically the commoner—way of self-giving and service is to a husband and children. It does not seem to be the more preferable in God's sight.

No human being can exist without love: a spiritual director's task

is to help every person to love God more and self less; love of God is proved by love of neighbor, and Christ's type for the neighbor I am to love is not husband nor child nor kinsman, but an *alien, a stranger*. The lesson is clear for the divorced or deserted woman, especially if she is childless.

The world's sentimental romanticism and idolatry of sex need not disturb a Catholic. Even an atheist can see that in sex we have no abiding city. The instinct of self-preservation is admittedly more powerful than the sexual instinct, but who will maintain that risking life makes misfits and neurotics of normal firemen or conscripts? Or that the Unknown Soldier is a symbol of frustration? Then why if we agree that such people can go against their most powerful instinct and remain normal, should we feel it impossible to restrain the use of the sex instinct?

The solution for any spiritual difficulties of the divorced or separated is the same as for anyone else's difficulties: it is to deepen one's grasp of *the basic truths* of our faith, outlined above.

### Uniquely needed

The vocation to be alone, even if it is "forced" upon her (by Infinite Love, Who cares even for sparrows!), should make it easier for a woman to realize the sublimity of human destiny. A woman has to be needed by someone. What every human being has somehow to grasp sooner or later, or be frustrated for all eternity, is that each of us is uniquely "needed" by God. "Thou hast made Thyself for us, O God, and Thy Heart is restless until it finds its rest in us."<sup>1</sup> This is utmost reality, infinitely more real than the husband-who-is, never mind the husband-who-might-have-been. And the divorced woman, if she is ready to accept her faith as true, can be, for the lack of that husband, in a better position to draw endless, strong consolation from her personal relationship to the living and eternal God. The deserted woman must kneel at the feet of God abandoned and crucified, and know that He died to give her the strength to keep her vow, which consecrates her to Him even as the vow of a virgin. The marital vow is still the pivot for any direction her life might take. The grace of the sacrament is still effective.

The spiritual director must firmly steer a lonely woman away from

<sup>1</sup> Father Peter Johanns, S.J., transposing St. Augustine for the Hindu.



the very real danger of her trying to compensate for loneliness in her human relationship with him. As in all spiritual direction, his job is to educate her to independence and teach her to throw herself upon God. "Why do you think God was at such pains to have you humanly lonely?" The priest must also try to break down the indefiniteness of life which envelopes her. How useless it is to drift aimlessly, with one's Catholicism as a private, interior affair, in a winter stupor that cannot see the harvest daily ripe all around one. Women (like men) have need of clear spiritual motives to control their moods and emotions and to channel their energies.

Let a woman have everything she could desire, without God, and she has nothing: stripped of every earthly good and human consolation she can still have everything that matters. To feel unwanted by man *can* help a Catholic woman to realize how infinitely she is wanted by God. Countless men and women blessed by their Creator not only with His love but with fortune and family were brought to the summit of human grandeur only when these "riches" were taken away; when in the deeper realization of their essential solitude God became all in all, and His every son and daughter their children.

## *The Mount of Olives*

*When I am stripped and empty, when the night  
    (The aboriginal void) clutches my will  
    And cries for its lost bit of nothing still—  
When in the toils of impotence and fright  
I strive to beat my way into the light,  
    And fail and fall upon my face and fill  
    My vacant world with terror, stark and shrill—  
I think that God has cast me from His sight.*

*But now I ask: When have I seen God's face?  
    If I would know the Holy Three in One  
    Must I not seek the Father in the Son,  
And in the Son the Giver of all Grace?  
    Shall Christ be known in some fond reverie,  
    Or in the shadow of Gethsemane?*

J. E. P. BUTLER



Elaine Malley

## a house divided

*There is no proof that a marriage is happy in the mere fact that a couple doesn't get a divorce.*

In a world littered with the brittle fragments and acrid refuse of broken marriages and successive polygamy, some Catholics find comfort in the thought that members of their own faith are relatively immune to the scourge of divorce. They fail to note, however, that the landscape of Catholic marital fidelity is strewn with whited sepulchres: loveless marriages held together only by an outward semblance of solidarity and eaten up within by animosity and hatred. I am not speaking here of notoriously stormy households beleaguered by violence and brutality, although Heaven knows we have our share of them. Nor do I refer to those marriages among some Catholics in Latin countries, in which the practice of adultery among men is so largely taken for granted. These are obvious aberrations, and universally to be deplored. They might serve one purpose: to keep us humble when we are tempted to compare nuptial notes with our sectarian brothers.

What I am concerned with is the spectacle of certain Catholics, who, having reached an impasse in their marriage that would send non-Catholics to the divorce courts, enter into a sort of undeclared spiritual divorce. They seem to say, in effect: "I've made a terrible mistake. *That One* has ruined my life. But I made a promise, and I'll stick to it. I'll see to it that no one points a finger of blame at me. But I'll make *That One* regret it as long as we both shall live."

### **Punitive measures**

The result is an undercurrent of smouldering ill will that betrays itself only spasmodically in outbursts of passion, but is almost constantly palpable. These people are able to go about the performance of their duties, support their families, keep house, go to church, raise their children, and all the while harbor resentment in their hearts against each other. It comes out when they are alone together, expressing itself in baleful glances, heavily charged silences, or sheer nervous tension. It comes out when they are together with other people, in their barbed and withering sarcasm. It reveals itself when they are apart with other people. If they do not go to the length of making outright complaints against each other, they indulge in sour disparagements of the opposite sex.

Saddest of all, it comes out in their relations with their children, and warps them. The children are used as escape-valves for their parents' feelings of hostility toward each other; or as weapons for their parents to hurt each other with; or as substitutes on which their parents lavish their thwarted faculties for affection. All their lives the children will have to contend with kinks in their psychological make-up created by their parents' antipathy for each other. This may be one answer to the puzzle of why some children from ostensibly staunch Catholic homes drift away from their faith. It has never been connected in their minds with love and happiness.

How does such enmity come about? Surely it was not always there. Most marriages begin with a sufficient degree of attraction between the couple to warrant a fair degree of companionship and pleasure in each other's company. In the majority of cases the face of the beloved holds all of Heaven for the lover. What are the elements that turn these promising unions into failures? For failures they are, even though the partners may continue to live together under one roof.

### **Impediments to peace**

The Marriage Reconciliation Court established by the authorities of a large archdiocese has salvaged thousands of Catholic marriages headed for the rocks. One of its counsellors, Father John L. Thomas, Director of the Institute of Social Order at St. Louis University, has made a painstaking study of the causes of marital disruption. He lists



nine of them in the order of their frequency as impediments to domestic peace.

The chief culprit he finds is drink, which is responsible for nearly one-third of marriage failures. Adultery comes second, causing trouble in about one-fourth of the cases. Irresponsibility or immaturity ranks third, and radical differences in temperament runs it a close fourth. The last five factors are respectively: in-law trouble, sexual maladjustment, mental illness, religious differences, and money difficulties.

For those whose work is concerned with the rehabilitation of unhappy households, these statistics are significant. There is no way, however, to safeguard marriage from the hazards listed, for they have their roots in human nature and their tendrils in the social conventions. And yet numbers of marriages successfully survive their onslaughts. Not only do the couples stay together; the bonds of consideration, forbearance, and good will remain intact.

### **Repudiation of charity**

It seems logical, therefore, that, while these disturbing elements must be recognized as forces to be reckoned with, they should be regarded not so much as primary causes but as contributing factors. There is still the reaction of the technically innocent party to be considered. And here is where the decisive drama takes place, between the disposition that would facilitate the corrosive action of the offense and the fundamental moral convictions that make it possible to resist its erosion. The ultimate cause of marital failure is the repudiation of the obligations of charity towards the partner who has given scandal. This is the cardinal infidelity, for it rises, not from weakness of the flesh, but from a deliberate hardening of the heart. Even though this repudiation is nearly always made with the consent of the conscious will, its enormity is generally hidden from the conscience by a sense of affronted righteousness and reproachful indignation. Self-love nearly always shields the soul from feelings of guilt by transferring the blame to the other person.

This is not to say that the offenses of the guilty person are to be condoned. On the contrary, they must be dealt with intelligently and realistically and firmly. But to put the offender beyond the pale of understanding and sympathy is to make it impossible to deal with his crimes, for they can no longer be seen as they really are, but only as they appear to the inflamed imagination of resentment and rancor.

The temptation to commit this act of negation may be encountered in any marriage, even the most successful, at almost any stage. Any of the causes listed by Father Thomas, or something of much smaller significance, may be the occasion of such temptation. The intimacy of the marital bond and the emotional interdependence of the couple give each partner a terrible power to hurt the other. The immediate reaction of the wounded one is an instinctive withdrawal of self in an attempt to revert to the lost Eden of single blessedness where such pain was unknown.

What it takes to overcome this temptation depends upon the gravity of the motivation and the degree of distress caused. In minor instances the natural resilience and generosity of human nature supported by grace are sufficient to restore peace almost immediately. A knowledge of the psychology of the opposite sex helps here to prevent unnecessary friction which might be caused by the natural tension between the sexes.

More serious offenses sometimes require more radical adjustments, although it is proverbial that the daily repetition of small aggravations can be more exasperating than an overwhelming catastrophe.

### **Religious difference**

For example, religious difference ranks eighth on Father Thomas' list and accounts for less than three percent of the failures. He is referring to mixed marriages. In homes where both parties are Catholic, religious difference might certainly be regarded as a minor matter. Yet even in those homes, if it is the main issue, it can loom like an insurpassable barrier and cause almost unbearable bitterness. There are many levels of Catholic vitality, and an infinite variety of means of expressing them. It is natural for people to want to share their deepest convictions with the persons nearest and dearest to them. When they find it impossible because they come up against deep-seated attitudes and prejudices, they are wounded. This is where the temptation rises to shut the unresponsive and sometimes hostile partner out of the sanctuary of further friendship. If this temptation is not overcome, each one takes refuge in the tight little fortress of his own righteousness, looking upon the other not only as a personal enemy, but an enemy of God. One will begin to seek and relish faults in the other, and make rash judgments, in order to justify his own impeccable position. If a solution is not found before the children come, their presence will

give added impetus to the battle as new recruits are lined up on one or both sides.

Here is a situation where religion, which should be a force for harmony and concord, has been scandalized by becoming a source of contention. Nothing is more contrary to the spirit of religion than an attitude of moral superiority which lacks humility and insight into another's perspective.

### **Adherence to charity**

If one is really right he has nothing to worry about. To take an aggressive position is automatically to intimidate, antagonize, and repel. The only way to disarm dissension is through strict adherence to the laws of charity: prayerful and self-contained concern for the other's spiritual happiness; open interest and regard for his material happiness; cheerful, light-hearted service; unfailing gentleness and consideration; the courtesy that respects another's spiritual privacy; the patience to wait as long as it takes for the Holy Ghost to work things out in His own way. An excellent exercise for married people to read periodically is this passage from the *Imitation of Christ*:

"We may not trust too much to ourselves; for grace and understanding are often wanting to us.

"There is in us but little light, and this we soon lose by negligence.

"Oftentimes we are quite unconscious how interiorly blind we are.

"We often do amiss, and do worse in excusing ourselves.

"Sometimes we are moved by passion and think it zeal.

"We blame little things in others, and overlook great things in ourselves.

"We are quick enough in perceiving and weighing what we bear from others; but we think little of what others have to bear from us."

It is easy enough to prescribe and concur with methods of dealing with temptation when one is standing safely beyond its thrust, or when its attack is not severe. There are two weapons however which, wielded against marriage, cause moral and emotional shock from which it is difficult to recover: excessive drinking and adultery. When they strike they have a way of paralyzing all reason and stifling for a time the conscience of the affronted party. In our society it is usually the man who is the chief offender here. The social stigma attached to a woman who drinks too much, or plays around, is still sufficiently formidable to act as a partial brake.



## Excessive drinking

Excessive drinking causes the greatest revulsion and has the most persistent wearing-down effect. It would be bad enough to have to contend with drinking alone, which so distorts the personality and befouls the body of its victim. But it is nearly always attended by other evils: irresponsibility, lies, violence, and financial trouble.

It seems strange that in days when overindulgence in drink was considered simply as a sin for which the individual was personally responsible there were fewer separations on its account than there are today, when it is regarded largely as a pathological phenomenon over which the victim has little control. There seems to be today more compassion in the theoretical attitude toward the alcoholic and less patience in the actual business of dealing with him.

## Adultery

Adultery does not have the long-drawn-out corrosive effect on marriage that drinking has, for it is seldom a matter of habit. But, because it strikes at the very essence of conjugal faith, one single act can cut deeply across every fiber of the union, and be the occasion of its open rupture.

There is, however, one aspect of adultery that is not generally taken into consideration. Except in the case of "accidental" adultery—a momentary and unpremeditated capitulation to unforeseen temptation—it seldom strikes like a bolt of lightning out of the blue. However shocking its discovery may be there has generally existed before the knowledge a disturbed and unwholesome climate in the home. In some cases there has been a gross neglect or violation of charity long before the physical act of adultery took place. There are more ways than one of getting rid of an unwelcome spouse, and women, who for centuries have had to seek devious methods to accomplish their aims, are past masters at roundabout maneuvers. Because adultery is conceded to be grounds for separation, it is customarily regarded, when it occurs, as the *cause* for separation, whereas frequently it is the last resort of a soul driven by unspeakable misery to seek consolation outside of the hell he lives in. The state of soul of the technically innocent party may at times be more precarious than that of the offender.

Whether the offense be alcoholism or adultery, it is not the predicament of the offender that concerns us here. It is the moral plight

of the affronted one, who has been driven to the verge of hatred or plunged into its cauldron by the other's conduct. No eloquent sermon on charity can help at this time. Preoccupation with the vibrations of her own suffering deafens her to any rhyme or reason in outside intervention. Only a sound spiritual preparation for the responsibility of facing up to all the unforeseen vicissitudes in marriage can see her through the darkness of this ordeal.

### **St. Monica did it**

I have laid special stress on three disturbing factors: religious difference, excessive drinking, and adultery, because they create typical reactions. Yet St. Monica had to contend with all three and she managed to bring her marriage through them all with flying colors. And it was not because marriage as a social institution was any more stable in her day than it is in ours. It is not only to her credit that she preserved the external union of her marriage; she kept burning its living flame, the continuity of close communion, by the fuel of unfailing faith, hope, and good will. It would never have occurred to her to say, "I never promised in the wedding ceremony to *love* him," since love of neighbor is an obligation imposed by God on everyone.

The strength of her marriage rested on her own valor. And her valor lay in her love of God and her willingness to serve Him as perfectly as possible through her vocation. Too many of us are inclined to seek our own private paradise in marriage, rather than the Kingdom of Heaven. Small wonder the walls crumble at a harsh glance.

Monica had a realistic attitude toward marriage, toward its responsibilities and the demands it would make on her, and she surrendered herself wholeheartedly to them. Too many of our ideas about marriage are extravagant illusions, which lead us to approach it with our fingers crossed.

She knew the holiness of marriage as a figure of the fruitful union of Christ and His Church. Many of our Catholic women still have the puritanical idea that the sacrament of matrimony serves only as a dispensation to commit an act which is essentially sinful. It is impossible for them to give themselves to marriage in a spirit of joyful dedication.

Monica knew how to forgive with simplicity and finality. How is it possible to say the "Our Father" unless one has forgiven? Too often, even when forgiveness is tendered, it has so many strings attached to it there is no way of grasping it.

St. Monica made a sacrament of every action and every moment of living together. Many of us acknowledge that marriage is for keeps; not enough of us realize that it is also for *now*, and for all the solace and sweetness and comfort that we can give.

It would seem from all that has been said that the burden of responsibility for the success of the marriage is laid upon the shoulders of the innocent partner. This is true, and for more than one reason. First, if the innocent will not join their Lord in making amends for the perversity of those He has redeemed, who will? "If the salt lose its savor, wherewith shall it be salted?" Second, innocence is a very dangerous state to be in, demanding constant vigilance. Our Lord pointed this out very clearly in His parable of the unclean spirit who returned to the house from which he had been driven to find it swept and garnished, only to go and find seven spirits more wicked than himself to enter in and dwell there with him. Third, much is demanded of one to whom much has been given, and the grace to be virtuous in marriage is a great gift, calling for deep humility, and gratitude, and generosity. Finally, who, in the sight of the Lord, is innocent? The world has had its fill of those self-proclaimed "innocents" whose sleep is haunted by the wide reproachful eyes of

"those who die of the cold—

The ultimate cold within the heart of Man."

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## THE REJECTED WIFE

"Even the rejected wife retains her nuptial character and is, in her banishment, immeasurably significant. As wife she nevertheless continues to stand in the eternal order of woman's life as the other half of man. It is then that the sacrament of matrimony, as the highest form of the mystery of charity and its actual consecration, stands forth in its inflexible sublimity and in the fullness of its sacred character, precisely at the moment when the marriage is most endangered.

"The divorced woman remains a wife and the other part of the man, because she is so before God. It is in the indissolubility of sacramental marriage that the part of the sexes within the Cosmos is mirrored. Metaphysically considered, this indissolubility denotes the inseparable quality of the two adjoining spheres of being, and the primal fact that God has established the one half of existence as irrevocably feminine."

Gertrude von le Fort, *The Eternal Woman*, Bruce



anonymous

## an alcoholic husband

*A woman who didn't get a divorce  
writes about her marriage.*

It is difficult to write about my marriage. Partly because to do so I must mention certain details which must inevitably make it sound like *True Confession*; but mostly because to write I must recall pain which is long since past, and it is as it says in the Gospels, "The woman when she has brought forth the child no longer remembers the anguish." The anguish is over, changed into peace by God. I cannot claim credit for this peace; I just am thankful for it.

I suppose it should have been obvious that my husband was an alcoholic even before we were married. But at that time the consensus of opinion in our crowd was that you just couldn't have any fun unless you took a few drinks. I must add that very often those few turned out to be many. This drinking continued even after we were married, but when I found out I was pregnant I decided it was time to settle down. Not so my husband.

I really think that if I had been closer to God at this point, I might have been able to help him overcome his weakness. Instead, I was his daily reminder. If he phoned to say he had to work late, I would ask him not to drink anything but to come straight home. You can guess what invariably happened.

I should mention here that we didn't have our own apartment. We lived with my husband's family because his father wasn't working



and we had to help out financially. My own father was tubercular and unemployed; consequently we had to help my family too.

Rather than drawing my husband and me together, the birth of our first child seemed to cause a breach between us. The baby was sickly and required a great deal of my attention. It wasn't that my husband didn't love the baby—I don't know anyone who loved children more. It's just, I guess, that he was still pretty immature himself and wanted, or needed, more attention from me than I could give him.

In any case, things got worse with the birth of each new baby. (We had three children.) At first I tried meeting him after work as casually as possible, but he was ridiculed by his friends, and of course I had to stop that. It got to the point that I hated to see him come home; week-ends were nightmares.

You must realize that at the beginning of my marriage I didn't know or care or realize the value of prayer, although I do remember asking God to give me strength to bear the whole situation. Arguments were the general rule in our home, because I was too stupid to keep quiet and let him sleep off his drunkenness. If I refused to give him dinner when he came home drunk at all hours of the morning, his mother would feed him.

Any decent kind of home life was impossible. Social life was out of the question. If we had guests, everything would be fine until he had one too many. Then it wouldn't make any difference who was there: the oral beatings began—the language used being unquotable. All this went on in front of the children. For me to have friends was out of the question. If I talked to neighbors, it was a "sin," because (he said) "no one was any good," and "if you liked people you couldn't be any good." After awhile I even refused to go anywhere with him because I was ashamed of his actions and drunkenness, and couldn't stand the pitying glances cast in my direction.

I became terribly bitter, partly, I think, because my father's alcoholism had made my childhood unhappy. Several months before we were married I had left home because of conditions there. And now, in my marriage, I found myself again in the same unbearable situation.

Anyway, things went from bad to worse. Since I was living as a pagan, it did not bother me when I refused my husband his marital privileges. When I did submit, it was only with the use of contraceptives. I absolutely refused to have any more children for him. How blind and willful I was. If it were not for my children I would still be wallowing in the muck of hell. All my life up until ten or twelve years

ago, I didn't care about church or Mass, or anything of a religious nature except the rosary. The rosary has always had a very special appeal for me since I was a child. I know now that Mary has always watched over me in a very special way.

When the children started school, I realized that they would soon be preparing to receive the sacraments and would start asking questions about why their father and I didn't go to Mass and Holy Communion. Besides that, God's grace must have started working in me, because it was at this time too that I realized that if I wanted good Catholic children I had to be their example. I started to pray to Our Lady for the grace to go to confession and receive Communion. By the time my oldest child was ready to receive for the first time, I was ready to receive along with him.

Of course it was from Communion that the strength came to carry on, for now another problem presented itself. If I was going to be a good Catholic wife and mother, what was I going to do about our marital relationship?

I spoke to one priest and explained the situation. Perhaps, as is often my trouble, I was not explicit enough; anyway he told me I had no right to refuse my husband. I didn't know what to do because by this time the situation was very bad. My husband became ill; so gravely in fact that the doctor who attended him asked me if I had a grave, and added that if I hadn't I'd better get one for him. (This was about three years before he died.)

I spoke with another priest with whom my husband had transacted some business and who thought highly of his abilities. He agreed with me that the situation was impossible, and that my husband must accept my terms (to try to stop drinking or leave us alone). This was very impractical because we were still sharing the apartment with his family. I spoke to another priest who was conducting a novena in our church. He told me I did not have to submit to my husband when he was intoxicated. Another priest told me to get my own apartment and see if living by ourselves would make a difference, and if it did not to get a separation from him. This too was impractical, because I didn't know what I would do with the children.

I could not depend in any way on my own family, and while my husband's mother and sister were sympathetic to me—well, blood is thicker than water; I knew there wouldn't be too much help from them. So you see I didn't stay because I was a martyr, but because I hadn't any choice.

Some of my husband's business associates tried to help him, and there was one priest who tried to get him to straighten himself out. It was suggested that he try AA, but he would have no part of it. I kept encouraging him to go back to church, but got no results.

As you can guess, I was nearly frantic running from here to there for advice. I got to feeling so sorry for myself and felt so persecuted, with my nerves all jagged, that the last of those years seem like a nightmare; I thank God I find it hard to remember very much about them. I know that from time to time he came home cut and bloody and stitched from falls he took, and maybe from beatings—I don't know. He spent time in hospitals, and I really think that one time he really did try to overcome this curse but he just didn't have the faith or courage to persevere.

And here again I must thank Our Lady because I know it was she who gave me the grace to try to help him and encourage him, because by this time any love I had for him was gone. All I could feel was pity that he threw his life away as he did. And all I could do was pray for him.

There is something that I learned through all this: there is One Whose love never changes. Somehow, through all these difficulties, He was showing His love for me.

When we had been married ten and a half years my husband died. He was granted the grace of a happy death; he received the last sacraments and the apostolic blessing and, I think, died in peace.

The children were young when my husband died (the oldest being nine). When he died they said, "Why did God take our Daddy? We liked him." They loved him, but I don't think they respected him. Now they seem to have only pleasant memories of their father. His alcoholism doesn't seem to have made any lasting impression on them, and now, nine years later, they are happy teen-agers. Whether, if he had lived, they would have suffered from their father's behavior as they got older, I cannot say.

I don't know whether it is better to continue living with an alcoholic husband or not. If I had to do it again, I suppose I would continue, but with a great deal more charity I hope. I know now that in such a marriage there is need for tremendous love and courage. One must forget oneself completely.

All I did was blunder through and depend on grace. It was a good feeling though to have his mother say to me when it was all over, "You have nothing to regret. You were a good wife to my son."

Father John Tung

## he chose death

*"I ask God that in the Communist Party  
there may be found many Sauls to become Pauls,  
who will far surpass the poor priest that I am."*

Editorial note: Our readers will recall that in the March issue mention was made of the Pledge of the Three Autonomies which was being exacted from the priests and faithful in China. This called for signed assent to Three Autonomies for the Catholic Church in China; namely, that the Church should be completely independent, completely self-supporting, and entirely Chinese. Many Catholics signed the Pledge without realizing that it really meant a national church separated from the Holy See. Father Tung was one of the Chinese priests who unwittingly signed the Pledge. To dramatize his acceptance of the Three Autonomies the Communists ordered him to declare his belief to a Catholic audience assembled at Chungking on June 2, 1951. In the meantime, however, Father Tung had come to realize the trap that had been laid for him, and much to the surprise of the Communists gave this speech which was his death warrant. At least no one has heard of him since.

### Father Tung's speech

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us. Mary conceived without sin, Mediatrix of all graces, pray for us. Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, pray for us.

Authorities of the Government, Dignitaries of the Church, Christians who are loyal to your faith, and Gentlemen. The subject of this speech will be: the sacrifice that I make of myself to the two Supreme Powers (my Religion and the State).



Some persons who do not believe in the existence of God, nor in the existence of the soul, who do not recognize the Pope as being the representative of Christ, who do not recognize the Catholic Hierarchy, present Triple Autonomy Movement, as a purely patriotic movement. These same persons recognize the liberty to adhere to the Catholic faith; they admit purely spiritual relations may exist between the faithful and the Pope. But a movement which is evolved outside the Hierarchy, today invites us to attack the representative of the Pope, H. E. Msgr. Riberi. Tomorrow we perhaps shall be asked to attack the Pope himself, who is Christ's representative. Why the day after tomorrow should we not be asked to attack Our Lord and God Jesus Christ Himself? We may always, in the course of an attack, make distinctions. But in reality, God is "one," and the Pope's representative is "one" and the Pope himself is "one." No distinction, no division is admissible. Such a development, the Triple Independence, would take from me all possibility of remaining a Catholic. A patriotic movement of such a nature is in fact incompatible with the Catholic Church.

Gentlemen, I have only one soul and I cannot divide it; I have a body which can be divided. It is best, it seems to offer my whole soul to God and to the Holy Church; and my body to my country. If she is pleased with it, I do not refuse it to her. Good materialists who deny the existence of the soul, cannot but be satisfied with the offering of my body only. I believe that if the State and the Church could collaborate, the movement for a Triple Autonomy, conformable to Catholic principles, would be recognized as a patriotic movement. If it were so, how much good would result both for the State and for the Church!

But on the contrary, the more the movement progresses the farther one is from the other. We have reached a point where almost any backward step is impossible. Very soon, the last thread to which we can attach our hope will be broken. How miserable I feel, unable to do anything, but as I am unable to remedy this situation, I have nothing better than to offer my soul to one party and my body to the other, in the hope of promoting their mutual understanding. I have nothing else to do as long as that understanding is not realized. I have no regrets. I only beseech God to have pity on the weakness of my nature and to give me the supernatural courage, and I will remain unshakable till death.

I beseech the authorities to accept my sacrifice and not to show me any sort of indulgence. And above all, if it happens that I weaken, I beseech them not to tolerate this weakness. Are not the weak the

scourge of society? Therefore, to prevent myself against all weakness, and in the event that I should lose control of my actions and speak words of weakness, I take this opportunity, while I am perfectly lucid, to solemnly declare that I disavow them and declare them right now null and void.

I am aware that the (civil) authorities many times have clearly explained that their intention is not to use force, but only to stimulate us; which makes it a duty for me to speak in complete frankness and never to say what I do not want to say. (The authorities wish that) I sign a declaration only if I sincerely approve of it, and if I do not approve, not to sign it hypocritically. Have not the authorities manifestly given us freedom of speech as well as the freedom of being silent? Why shouldn't we believe their declarations?

Suppose, that under the effect of I know not what fear, I go against my conscience, talk contrary to my own opinions, sign what I disapprove of, then I deliberately deceive the authorities; and if I say in secret that I made a mistake because I was forced, I equally deceive the Hierarchy. Would not such conduct sow discord between the Government and the Church? If I strangle the voice of my conscience, deny my God, leave the Church and cheat the Government, I am nothing more than an opportunist and a coward. I would then be only one of those persons in whom nobody can have confidence, whose life has no value for anyone. Who then would want to have me, who would want to help me? I would only be a miserable outcast deserving of all punishment from the authorities in this world and eternal punishment in the next from divine justice.

### **Admirable qualities of the Communists**

It is true that I am a Catholic. But this does not prevent me from having a very great admiration for the Communists. They believe neither in God nor in the soul, still less in heaven or hell. It is my conviction that they are mistaken. However, they have more than one quality which compels admiration, shakes my own indolence and brings me to recall vividly the millions of martyrs of our Church during the course of 2,000 years. These martyrs are the ones who urge me to beseech God, day and night, to forgive my numerous sins and grant me the unparalleled gift of martyrdom.

The first admirable quality of the Communists is that they are capable of facing death. They never betray their cause and deceive

others by giving some excuse, as General Li Ling did to rationalize his capitulation: "If I did not fight to death, it is because I was preserving myself for future deeds." Should I a Catholic be cowardly, or attached to life, and use the pretext of preserving myself for future service to the Church? A Christian who betrays his God, also betrays his Church and his country. The Communists are wont to say: "For one who falls, 10,000 will rise." How could a Catholic forget: "the blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians."

The second admirable quality of the Communists is, they show no fear when accused of crimes and condemned to death: "The people's eyes," they say, "see clearly and are not mistaken." This is the reason why they face death with such pride. Now, how could a Christian fear to be falsely accused and abused; how could he fear that this unjust death is without value or meaning? How could he forget that our "Supreme Judge is the Omnipotent God, full of wisdom and kindness, justice and equity?"

The Communists also possess a third quality. When they are right but fail to convince others, they maintain their own faith intact. If it happens that they are beaten in an argument or discussion, they do not abandon their belief, quit or doubt the party. How could a Christian forget his faith which has been given him by God? How could he feel the entire Church is defeated because he himself has been defeated? If he did that, he would soon falsify the Church doctrine and weaken its discipline, betray his God and his soul. If I betray my God and my soul, who could then guarantee that I would not betray my motherland and my people? This is why I refuse to be shaken in my faith and be an instrument by which other Christians' faith should be shaken. This is why I refuse to abase my priesthood by misleading the faithful.

### **To offer them the Catholic Church**

The Communists whom I admire, have a true consideration for the Catholic Church which I love, and endeavor to win the support of the Christians. I confess that I feel much honored by it. Why then should I not redouble my forces to be an unshakable Christian in answer to the noble intention of the Government. I will not "exhibit a sheep's head and sell dog meat."

I do not content myself with admiring the unshakable courage of the Communists and thank them for their noble intention of trying to win the Christians. I still have a great desire. It is to offer them the

Catholic Church which is so dear to me, in order to bring them to God and make them our brothers in the faith. Do not say I am a fool who prattles crazy things, and do not believe that I lack sincerity! I dare say that Communists who have a high ideal, would make good Catholics completely devoted to their faith and would surpass a thousand times a Catholic such as I am, when the day dawns that they really know the Catholic Church. I also ask God that in the Communist Party there may be found many Sauls to become Pauls, who will far surpass the poor priest that I am. It is my most fervent prayer. To this end, I spare myself no sacrifice, praying with hope that the earthly life which I offer today might bring the conversion of future generations.

This is my way of seeing things. The composition of this speech is faulty; please excuse a man who could not put the required care into it. Moreover, because I did not obtain ecclesiastical approval, my speech evidently cannot represent the Church's opinion. The speech is also without the approbation of the civil authorities. It is only the expression of what seems to be an ideal, but it is perhaps nothing but a beautiful personal dream.

### **I am a Catholic Chinese**

I am a Catholic Chinese. I love my country but I also love my Church. I categorically disapprove of anything that is in opposition to the laws of my country or to the laws of my Church, and before all I strongly refuse anything that could breed discord. But if the Church and the Government cannot achieve an accord, all Chinese Catholics, sooner or later, will have only to die. Why not then immediately offer my life to hasten the mutual understanding of both parties? If my offering is not accepted, the only reason is that understanding is not wanted, that peace is rejected. I hardly believe the Government will permit itself to be drawn irrevocably into demanding the death of the 3,700,000 Chinese Catholics.

If a member of the Catholic Hierarchy does not accept my prayer, or considers me as one out of order who mixes in things not of his concern, this person may punish me with suspension, but no one can forbid me to have recourse to higher authority, to the Pope himself if need be. But if in this desperate situation we both still have the courage to look for a solution, reconciliation can be attained. May I be pardoned for all the shortcomings of this speech.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.



# book reviews

## EXISTENCE AND THERAPY

by Ulrich Sonnemann, Ph.D., Grune & Stratton, \$7.75

This book has profound interest, and indeed performs a great service, for those concerned with the field of psychology in this country. Dr. Sonnemann points out that despite the greater possibilities of international communication of new developments in all areas of knowledge, "psychology in America and Europe now seem, to share hardly more than the name." *Existence and Therapy* serves to present and clarify certain newer developments in psychology and psychotherapy that stem from existential philosophy.

The existential philosophy in question owes nothing to Sartre—so widely known to Americans—but rather to the existential movement leading from Kierkegaard to Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers, and Gabriel Marcel.

Certainly Catholics in Europe see the importance of these recent developments. Walter Smet, S.J., of Brussels in his book *The Human Person*, in discussing the necessity of a breakthrough from the mechanistic and biological conception of man in which present thinking is bogged down, states:

"It would be preferable by far, it seems to me, to support the existentialist emphasis in modern psychology, for by bringing the psychologist closer to a direct experience of the human being, and by giving him the example of a really personalistic attitude, many theoretical differences would disappear by themselves.

"At the present time, the emphasis upon the existentialist point of view is important because it seems to be a real opening in a hitherto completely objectivistic and mechanistic structure. If we refuse to use it, we may miss our chance of reorienting psychology toward what we know from our Christian experience is the living reality of the person."

*Existence and Therapy* has profound interest for Catholics because it shows how European psychiatrists, using the insights gained from a philosophy of crisis (which existentialism certainly is), deal with the psychic crisis of man in the twentieth century. Besides being influenced by the existentialists these psychiatrists have gained much from Edmund Husserl who in his researches into phenomenological psychology, aimed to provide the basis on which a truly empirical psychology could be built—empirical in the sense that no aspect of experience, of consciousness, of the psychical, of the soul, would be omitted.

Among the points which stand out in Dr. Sonnemann's presentation are first, the emphasis on the necessity for the psychotherapist to be a creatively receptive vehicle so as to understand the world-design, or value-structure, of a patient. The therapist must be open to this compassionate comprehension, and even in the case of psychotics, see how a seemingly untenable position may be tenable for a troubled soul. The striking case of the author's patient, K., is cited in this regard. K., a schizophrenic, highly skilled in arithmetic, in every problem of addition, added one extra digit to the total, in every problem of subtraction, subtracted an extra digit; thus five plus five, always gave eleven, forty-eight plus seventy-three always gave one hundred twenty-two. It developed that the same personal arithmetic invaded multiplication and division, except that the "one" did not show up in the final figure.

The author points out . . . "that which blocked the horizon in his case had become the knowledge that he *had always been left out*, and this knowledge was but in strict accordance with the facts of his biography. Once this was understood, nothing was more natural than that he should always add *himself* when the opportunity of *adding* arose in the first place; but he not only added, he also *subtracted* himself, when subtraction was the task of this hour, for it was not self-assertion that motivated him, but world-sharing: he had been left out from the world as the locus of *participation*, so he participated as the *one* he knew he was, in whatever engagement or action (and however self-sacrificial was the demand) the world called for."

This patient recovered after finding that the implications of his attempt "to live his own truth" were understood by the therapist. Such a liberating insight, most assuredly for this psychotic, and even for the less disturbed, must often come from the creatively perceptive therapist. Such an insight is thus not simply an intellectual event, but an experience engaging the whole person.

This points up a second aspect of existential therapy in the United States. Though this therapy shows what might be called a religious humility before the complexity of the total human person, and though it rejects absolutely the concept of the therapist who looks on his patient as an object, it is more directive than psychoanalysis and other methods of therapy more commonly practiced here.

The potentially most valuable aspect of existential psychology is its emphasis on what is healthy in man, on what is free and purposive—in contradiction to such systems as the Freudian which lay stress on what is *diseased*, what is unfree or determined. Dr. Sonnemann comments that: "The new tyrant holding man and his future in bondage is the robot within and without." As Catholics, we have long been conscious of the dangers of the total conscription of man, by dehuman-

izing toil without, by conscription of conscience within (as practised by the free and slave states). We have not been prepared, however for outraged human nature's reaction to the deforming forces of our age of violence and total crisis.

There is much to think about in the discussion of Ludwig Binswanger and of Medard Boss, especially the latter, whose investigations into the universality of the love norm, stress the absoluteness of love. Boss indicates that the love norm even extends to the forms of perversions. Binswanger's tenet regarding dread as the central core of existence, derives from Heidegger and ultimately from Kierkegaard. But theoretical differences disappear, as Father Smet pointed out "in the example of a really personalistic attitude." Binswanger (quoting Kierkegaard) describes thus the psychotherapist: "In neither attempting an unfree devotion, nor recognizing an unfree imitation, he—himself free—sets everyone coming near him in a free rapport to himself." Especially memorable are the author's descriptions of those states that are inaccessible to the psychoanalytic grasp, joy, the inspirational states, the enthusiasms, love's power to transfigure pain, the creative role of suffering both for the individual, and for that society which glorifies "painless pleasure hunting."

The style of *Existence and Therapy* particularly in Part I, comprising the first six chapters, makes the discussion of abstract ideas hard going for the reader. The sentences are involved and long and in a laudable attempt at accuracy, excessively qualified. Part II is a unique exposition in forty pages of the origins and themes of existentialism with its implications for the present human condition. Part III, consisting of six chapters, is far less abstract, far more easily grasped, rich in examples and case histories, and in the opening up of the new avenues that psychotherapy may follow in our day.

This reader missed in *Existence and Therapy* any discussion of the work of Victor Frankl of the University of Vienna. Frankl's books have not appeared here as yet, but his new paths in existential analysis, logotherapy, have already evoked repercussions on this side of the Atlantic. On the occasion of his one lecture in New York, he awakened in many of his listeners a keen desire to have his books available in English. Frankl, a wartime concentration camp inmate, pointed out that, "The Essence of man is responsibility," and that "Religion is not an obsessional neurosis, but repressed religion leads to an obsessional neurosis."

The role of the Church in the social field has vastly changed from those early days of the Christian era when the Church helped the wandering and invading tribes of Europe to settle down to being stable cultivators and the creators of a culture. Now, the Church must deal

with man on the move, uprooted man, following him in his forced wanderings or his chosen mobility. So in the field of the emotions, of the psyche, there has been a corresponding change of function. Man is also psychically uprooted; he has less sense of belonging to a definite culture or homogeneous group; he has no firm roof nor stable ground from which a sure personality may naturally grow. The Church must participate in the necessary "reorienting of psychology" to deal with psychic conflicts that mark so many individuals in our time, but it is also called upon to revivify its teachings—and the manner of its teachings—so that it can supply to the uprooted man of our day a shelter above his head that is the safe covering of love in a world of violence, and under his feet the sure ground of eternal principles. Man's psyche, unlike any other area of knowledge, is the concern of the Church.

*Existence and Therapy* with its exposition of new and valid approaches to the study and therapy of man, deserves and repays careful reading.

*Jerem O'Sullivan-Barra*

## THE IMAGE OF GOD IN SEX

by Vincent Wilkin, S.J., Sheed & Ward, \$1.75

One wonders what was the intention of the author of this little book. It is so elementary in its discussion of sex and so complex in pursuit of the sex image in scripture and theology that it seems hardly suitable either for young couples about to marry or for scholars. Still, every book that dwells on the goodness and holiness of the procreative act is needed and welcome. One is grateful to Father Wilkin for his attempt and for whatever good the book may do.

The book gets off to a good start. There is a nice clear statement that "sex was entirely God's idea." And there is an admirable diagram in which a series of holy unions—animal reproduction, non-Christian marriage, Christian marriage, Mystical Body, Our Lord's two Natures in one Person—lead pyramidally to God. The explanatory chapter is lucid and brief.

When the author goes on to explain the latter two unions, however, he becomes entangled in such a network of scriptural references and metaphorical applications that in the end, though the theological meanings may be clear, their relevance to human sexual activity is not.

For instance, the reader is told that Christ is "married" to His flesh in the womb of the Virgin (a common image in the writings of the early Church fathers), He is married to the Church in the Mass and thereby begets all Christians, and He is "married" to each Christian as a Vine is married (?) to its branches. To be told in the same paragraph that St. Paul said: "It was I that begot you in Christ Jesus" is to



make the reader sigh, it's a wise child who knows his own spiritual father.

The latter chapters of the book, which deal with human marriage, are disappointing for other reasons. There seems too much uncritical emphasis on "the higher fecundity of virginity." The author says that "merely not to marry is a negative thing, of less dignity than marriage," and then goes on to state that "virginity fulfills it (incorporation in Christ) more than marriage for *it is entirely given to spiritual generation.*" (italics ours).

When does "not to marry" turn into "virginity"? With the taking of a private vow of chastity? Joining a Secular Institute? The author mentions both but he does not make this clear. Does physical generation in any degree preclude spiritual generation? Can not marriage, too, be "entirely given to spiritual generation" even while it effects physical generation? Is it fair to compare the perfection of virginity with anything less than the perfection of marriage?

The author states unequivocally that "corporeal generation (is) holy intrinsically." He says, "Quite naturally marriage is a holy thing." He makes it clear that the union of husband and wife is no mere symbol of the union of Christ and His Church but a representation, a "*making present again*" of that union.

From these truths in all their awesome holiness, however he goes on to a series of little homilies, a little chat with Father at the rectory, in which nothing is said that a churchgoing Catholic has not heard.

The reader who finds himself dissatisfied with Father Wilkin's cursory exploration of so beautiful and so vast a territory may be interested in Jean Guilton's informative *Essay on Human Love*.

Hugh and Elizabeth McMenamin

### THE BOOK OF THE POOR IN SPIRIT

by: a Friend of God, translated and edited by C. F. Kelley  
Harper, \$3.50

The translator-editor of this classic on the spiritual life is a Benedictine monk of Downside Abbey, well known for his translations of the works of St. Francis de Sales. The actual author is unknown, but was one of the Friends of God, a loose-knit group of laymen and religious who were devoted to spiritual advancement in the Rhineland of the fourteenth century. Meister, Eckhardt, Tauler, and Blessed Henry Suso all wrote at this time, and the *Book of the Poor in Spirit* is a work representative of their school of mysticism.

It is difficult to tell, in a translation, just how much of the style

of a book belongs to the original author, so perhaps it is due to Father Kelley's excellent English that much of the effusiveness that one expects in works of this period is absent. The paradoxes of Eckhardt, the allegories of Tauler, and the poetry of Blessed Suso are missing and the matter is handled in a more matter of fact way which is certainly not less effective, and makes for ease in reading.

Poverty is synonymous with detachment throughout the book, but the evangelical exhortation to sell all one has and give to the poor is by no means lacking. Practical examples are given, however, which tend to minimize errors regarding mystical hyperbole and discourage inordinate impoverishment. Still, a thorough reading of the excellent introduction is first in order, so that the background of its times and conditions may aid the understanding of this spirituality. This is much like that of the *Imitation of Christ*, which is excellent, but is not, as a very fervent young salesman remarked to me in a train, a good book for laymen. To follow it *literally* would lead one far from the duties of one's state in life, the first element in seeking the will of God.

In effect, it encourages a spirituality which tends to flee the world, *to be dissolved in Christ*, rather than a spirituality which tends to work in the world *to restore all things in Christ*. This may be accounted for by the fact that although at the time of the writing there was a strong mystic movement among the Rhenish laity, the book was perhaps composed for cloistered nuns as were so many other contemporaneous spiritual works. Thus it is hardly a spirituality conducive to Catholic Action as understood today. Yet its main thesis needs always to be reiterated: man must aspire to God first. Love of neighbor is only possible on this basis. The observance of the second commandment springs fullborn from perfect fulfillment of the first.

Joseph E. Norton

### SOCIAL RELATIONS IN THE URBAN PARISH

by Joseph H. Fichter, S.J., University of Chicago Press, \$5.00

The parish is not only a center of worship. It is also a complicated system of human relationships. These engage individual parishioners. Yet since parishioners also belong, both inside and outside of the parish, to various social groups, an objective knowledge of the parish requires a systematic investigation of the influence of these groups on the behavior of parishioners, and on their more or less approximate conformity to ideal parochial standards. This is all the more needed for American parishes as group life plays a more important part in the life of Americans than it does in some other countries. Father Fichter's

book is the outcome of such an investigation, carried out in several white parishes in a Southern city.

The first part proposes a classification of parishioners into four categories: "nuclear," "modal," "marginal" and "dormant." The author remains strictly scientific in his findings and avoids value judgments. Yet one point strikes the present reviewer: the urban parish seems to be in a bad way. This may be illustrated with the statistics given. Out of 14,838 persons over seven years old in the area studied, 5,786 are "dormant" Catholics. (Nominal Catholics who have practically renounced their Faith but who have joined no other religious group.) Of the remaining 9,052 persons, 10% are "nuclear" (good Catholics who are also active in parish organizations), 70% are "modal" (average practising Catholics), 20% are "marginal" (lukewarm Catholics who go to Church once in a while). There should be added to this the unknown number of former Catholics who have joined non-Catholic denominations. (These are not studied here.) The small proportion of active Catholics in parochial organizations suggests that in their present form these do not meet the religious needs of most people. The very high percentage of persons who are, to all practical purposes, ex-Catholics (even though unattached to any denomination) shows that priests may be entertaining a dangerous illusion when they feel satisfied with their packed Sunday congregations. A comparison of these facts with the total population of the areas under survey would point out how small an impact Catholic practise has on the religious tonus of society. But this is not included in the book.

Parts II and III ought to be carefully studied. They deal with the influence of non-religious circumstances (social status, urban mobility . . .) on religious participation (II) and with the mutual relationships of priests, parishioners, parish sodalities and parochial schools (III). The author does not renounce the hypothesis of his former book, *Southern Parish*, that the parish is "the most important agency for stabilizing and re-christianizing American urban culture and society." Yet his enquiry clearly raises questions as to the adequacy of parish life to the requirements of a modern apostolate. And these should in turn suggest a more basic query: in view of what kind of apostolate are seminarians trained?

Part IV surveys some problems met by sociologists in their studies of parishes. This is not immediately connected with the previous analyses. Yet insofar as the author wishes to persuade the clergy of the need for unbiased sociological surveys of their parishes, it is relevant here. Priests want well-running parishes (though they must know that the best parishioner is not always the best Catholic). Laymen are more interested in the spiritual inspiration they will find in a parish than

in the niceties of its organization (but they should also remember that Catholicism is essentially corporate). The sociologist shows what influences help or impede both, and what kinds of social relations would meet the needs of the laity and ensure the better efficiency of the parish.

One last remark may be made. It seems to become a rule in sociological research among Catholics that the universe studied should be anonymous. In this case the conclusion remains in the abstract and this is not helpful in the long run. Very courageous studies were recently published on religious practise in the city of Grenoble and the archdiocese, of Marseilles. Because they were specific they now form useful background works for priests and laymen in these areas. It may be true that a research worker acting on his own authority should perhaps not reveal facts that would be thought detrimental to the reputation of the clergy or people involved. This is why the present reviewer likes what was done at Marseilles: the archbishop wrote a preface, and his vicar-general an introduction, to a detailed study of who goes and who does not go to church in their archdiocese. By sharing in the venture they helped all concerned to swallow their own pill. . . .

*George H. Tavard*

## THE ETERNAL WOMAN

by Gertrud von le Fort, Bruce, \$3.50

"Marital infidelity symbolizes and divorce legalizes the betrayal of the mystery of charity." This is just one of the passages I wish to quote from this beautiful and profound book. Beginning with the position of Mary in history, Miss von le Fort discusses in three essays the significance of woman under the symbolic aspects of Virgin, Bride, and Mother. With keen insight she writes about femininity and feminism, marriage and divorce, maternity and children, virginity and vocation.

"There is no such thing as woman's right to a child; there is only the right of the child to a mother." Similarly, "there is in the world no woman's right, so called, to a profession or vocation; but the world has a child's right to the woman. . . . The cry of today for the mother has its origin not only in desires aroused by problems of population and politics, but its undertone carries the weight of a spiritual longing."

To the involuntarily single woman "who does not recognize in her virginity a value that has its relationship to God, the unmarried state and childlessness are really a profound tragedy. Both to marriage and to children, woman is spiritually and physically more disposed than man, and to be deprived of them can lead her to regard her own existence as utterly futile. However, the inner meaning of her unmarried state and her childlessness remains unimpaired by this apparent useless-



ness . . . perhaps at this point it becomes decidedly intensified; for it is perhaps only an existence seemingly the most worthless that can most fully establish the final value of the *person* as such."

The virgin "defends the marriage of her sister women. For the majority of the latter the dissolution of the marriage tie becomes inevitable as soon as the unmarried woman loses her respect for virginity. Without the virgin there is no marriage and therefore no really protected motherhood."

"Woman's mission touches the mystery of the world," Gertrud von le Fort concludes, showing the full meaning and mystery of redemption summed up in the humble *Fiat* of Mary at the Annunciation. This *fiat* must be renewed by every woman; only in woman's unconditional self-surrender to God will she find her vocation.

Doreen O'Sullivan

### THE WAY OF THE CROSS

by Caryll Houselander, Sheed & Ward, \$2.75

In this, Caryll Houselander's final offering before her death, the heart of Christianity, the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Our Lord, Lent and Easter, is beautifully presented.

Whether or not one is familiar with Miss Houselander's other books, this one will induce what must be the author's supreme object in her writing—prayer. Through her compassion, the purity of her expression and illustration, we glimpse and receive her message.

With wonder we are confronted with the inescapable miracle—we in Christ—and He in us. From that Day—now—forevermore—the indwelling *is*. This is the *Via Crucis* of which Caryll Houselander speaks—the road through death to life, where each man meets himself. Here is the ache of suffering and love—revealed at once through one *Man*.

To offer in Lent the utter simplicity Caryll Houselander has expressed, to "Behold the Man" through her eyes, is to see also through the eyes of Simon, Veronica, the soldiers and the blessed Mary on every step of the way to Golgotha. Again and again we stare at the Cross. The figure is familiar (even to pagans), so much so, perhaps, that we say we know Him, we know His Passion. But then we awake to discover the lack of its reality in our lives. How can we bear to allow our unknowing to deprive us of the joyous heights of Easter? This book of meditations on the Stations of the Cross will help us bring the reality of the Passion more intimately into our lives.

Janet Burwash

## IN THE NAME OF SANITY

by Lewis Mumford, Harcourt Brace, \$3.75

This book is my first sampling of the work of Lewis Mumford. It is only a sampler, being a collection of articles and lectures. I found the four articles dealing with questions and predictions about atomic war and the world state less interesting than the five lectures which are concerned with man, art and technics. These make one want to go to Mr. Mumford's major work: the four-volume *Renewal of Life*.

The encyclopedia lists Mr. Mumford as a social philosopher. While he makes one reference to "the archaic confines of neo-Thomism," most of his thought would be in harmony with neo-Thomists I have read; his religious attitude seems to be one that, if not agreeing in all, would harmonize with much Catholic thinking. He says the aim of his book is to give "fresh insight" on our violence and irrationality. In my opinion he satisfies this aim.

Mr. Mumford criticizes the isolation of scientists and makes the telling point that scientists in their narrow concentration are able to work under totalitarian conditions that would crush an artist, poet or philosopher. He points out that man in broadening his scientific knowledge, forgot truths religion and art had always recognized.

According to the author, the situation calls for "conversations at the lowest levels" although in other places he asks for world government. I take this to mean that reform must begin at the bottom with proper leadership. Industry councils, for instance, can only begin with a reform of factory work on some group basis. There is a need to philosophize from our own situation as James Collins writes of some existentialists.

Mr. Mumford also puts his finger on the thing that makes one despair of reform, in industry at least. It is the concern with the immediate present, the "hyperactive" present, which amounts to a compulsion neurosis. The question of whether they can shut the line down long enough to think, until it is shut down by a depression is the big one. We have no goal other than keeping the machine running. We use external activity as a cover-up. We believe that automatic processes, once started, must run their course.

He has his feet on solid ground when he says that the human situation has always been desperate. He recognizes original sin although not mentioning it specifically. Much of his book could be used to prove a thesis that our troubles stem from refusing to recognize original sin. The fruits of reason reaped in scientific wonders have led us to try to make a rational plan of all life, ignoring the mystery of the war of reason and irrationality in every man, that is only resolved by grace.

As the author puts it in his last two chapters, the question is whe-

ther Prospero or Caliban triumph, the explosive power of irrational energy or grace-triggered life.

*John C. Hicks*

### **CHRIST ACTS THROUGH THE SACRAMENTS**

by A. M. Roguet, O.P., Liturgical Press, cloth \$2; paper \$1.25

### **THE SACRAMENTS IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE**

by M. M. Philipon, O.P., Newman, \$4.25

While the sacraments of the Church have tremendous influence on the lives of the individual members of the Mystical Body of Christ, it is most important for each member to be aware of their communal aspects. Sacraments are the external signs of their belonging to the Christian Community. Use of them by the members should heighten the consciousness of the unity between Head and members and among members, which is Christ's dearest desire. St. Augustine points out: "It is impossible to keep men together in one religious denomination, whether true or false, except they be united by visible signs or sacraments." (Contra Faustum, xix)

The two books under review are well suited to help Catholics come to a fuller realization of the integral meaning of their sacramental life.

For a vivid introduction that will leave a lasting impression and arouse an appetite for further enlightenment, we suggest *Christ Acts Through the Sacraments*. The total impression of this book is surprisingly unified despite the varied sources of its parts. The first part answers the question: What is a sacrament? The material was originally used as a series of conferences on a short paragraph in a pastoral directive issued to the French clergy. The first chapter is a brilliant exposition of the book's title: Christ Acts through the Sacraments. Subsequent chapters explain how the sacraments are sacred signs, signs of grace, signs of faith and signs of the Church. The second part, originally a series of radio talks, is concerned with each of the sacraments. The author has made abundant use of the ritual devised by the Church to surround the administration of the sacraments. The final part is entitled: Notes on Sacramental Spirituality; and it is simply that, for the author hopes to develop the idea in this section in a later work.

Father Philipon's solid work will amply satisfy the appetite aroused by the previous work for a more profound doctrinal understanding of the sacraments. His introduction is entitled: "The Social Import of the Sacraments," and it is his purpose throughout to emphasize this aspect, although he never neglects to expound the personal value of the sacramental life.

*J. V. C.*



**COLUM OF DERRY**

by Eona K. MacNicol, Sheed & Ward, \$3.25

Sixth century Eire. The aged abbot Finbar of Moville had returned from Rome with a Jerome Psalter. Colum of Derry, already far advanced in his mission, wanted a copy so that he might begin the purification of the defective psalters then in use. Finbar refused or put him off and Colum made a secret copy and carried it away to his seat in Derry. Somehow the act was discovered and Colum was summoned to judgment before Diarmaid, High King of Eire. Diarmaid gave judgment against Colum and compounded the injury by killing the hostage prince, Curnan of Connacht in Colum's sanctuary. Colum raised Derry and Connacht against Diarmaid to win the battle of Culdrevny. Then Colum repented for the bloodshed and accepted penance of exile to Alba (Scotland), to found Iona.

This is a lovely little book, a short novel in which the great days of the Irish monastic foundations are wonderfully restored. It is said that no one writes English in our time so well as the Irish. That may be an overstatement of the case but there is no doubt that the Irish write very well indeed and the author of this book is no exception.

*J. E. P. Butler*

**HESED AND HASID IN THE PSALMS**

by Dom Rembert Sorg, O.S.B., Pio Decimo Press: 60¢

For those who love the psalms, for those who find in the breviary daily nourishment for their prayer life, here is a short treatise (63 pages) which will considerably expand their understanding of the songs of David.

Dom Sorg treats the psalter as a whole, written by one primary Author and slants it toward popular, not scientific consumption. He discusses, for example, cursing in the psalms which has been an enigma to many modern readers. A very coherent explanation on both the literal and spiritual levels is offered.

But the heart of this little treatise is the unfolding of the meaning of "Hesed," one of the great words referring to God in the Hebrew language which defies translation into western tongues. In the English translation "Hesed" is rendered as God's mercy 83 times; His graciousness, 32 times; divine goodness, 7 times; also clemency, piety, kindness. When he has finished Dom Sorg's little study, the reader will probably feel that St. John's "Caritas" comes closer than any of these other words to the full meaning of "Hesed." This is a treatise well worth pondering over.

*Margaret A. Heizmann*



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